

Remarks

I. Introduction

This is in response to the Office Action dated October 8, 2003. The Office Action rejected claims 1, 5, 7, 13 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,611,873 (Kanehara). Claims 2-4, 6, 8-12, 14-18 and 20-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanehara. The drawings were objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR §1.84(p)(5) because the reference sign "250" was not mentioned in the description.

In response, Applicants have amended the specification to obviate the drawing objection. The specification has also been amended to correct a typographical error. Applicants traverse the claim rejections.

Claims 1-24 are pending.

II. Drawing Objection

Applicants have amended the paragraph at page 8, lines 4-13 to add the callout number "250" to the specification in order to reference the callout number "250" in Fig. 5. Withdrawal of the drawing rejection is requested.

III. Claim Rejections under §§102 and 103

All claims were rejected based upon the Kanehara reference. However, Kanehara is not available as a reference against the present application.

This application claims the benefit of United States provisional application No. 60/151,194, filed August 27, 1999. In accordance with 35 U.S.C. §119(e), the claims of the present invention are entitled to the August 27, 1999 filing date.

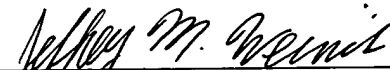
The Office Action indicates that Kanehara is prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). However, the effective prior art date of Kanehara in accordance with §102(e) is its U.S. filing date of November 22, 1999.

Kanehara is unavailable as a prior art reference because the August 27, 1999 effective filing date of the present application is prior to the November 22, 1999 effective date of Kanehara.

IV. Conclusion

Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: March 3, 2004
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